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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000862

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/06/2014

TAGS: [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [NLD](#) [ASSK](#)

SUBJECT: NLD AND ASSK: THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

REF: A. RANGOON 779 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. RANGOON 714 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: UN Special Envoy Razali's "Man in Rangoon" painted a gloomy picture of the current state of the NLD. While the party and its executive board remain in stasis, awaiting the release of General Secretary Aung San Suu Kyi, the GOB steams ahead along its bogus democracy "Road Map." Though NLD leaders are finally getting the message that international pressure alone will not achieve domestic political change, some of the party's youngest and most motivated members are already fleeing in frustration for the Thai border. End summary.

"We are Completely Stuck"

[1](#)2. (C) In a July 7th meeting with the Chief of Mission (COM), Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) confidant and UN Special Envoy Razali's "Man in Rangoon" Leon de Riedmatten (LDR) painted a notably gloomy picture of the state of the NLD. While the GOB's self-described "Road Map to Democracy" and constitutional National Convention steam ahead (ref B) he said he was frustrated that local stakeholders, namely the NLD Central Executive Committee (CEC) and ASSK (still under house arrest), had been unwilling to express an opinion or propose a strategy for taking things in another direction. "We are completely stuck," he lamented.

[1](#)3. (C) LDR noted that the NLD apparatus remained in a dangerous "wait and see" mode, with the CEC apparently awaiting the release of party General Secretary ASSK before devising any policy alternatives. He said that although clandestine channels of communication that the NLD has been using remain in place, for the last several months he'd heard nothing from ASSK and had gotten very little sign of intellectual life from the mostly octogenarian members of the CEC.

Too Much Reliance on the International Community

[1](#)4. (C) LDR revealed that he had distributed to ASSK, the CEC members, and other opposition political organizations a copy of a UN-drafted paper on "what the UN could and could not do" for Burma. The purpose was to stress that complete reliance on the international community, and particularly a UN "silver bullet," to bring about change was unproductive. He pointed out to the opposition politicians that "only 40 countries had sponsored the General Assembly resolution on Burma, with 150 abstaining." He did suggest to the CEC, though, that if they wanted to raise the Burma situation with the UN Security Council they should send a letter directly to the UNSC chair asking for consideration.

[1](#)5. (C) The message has apparently gotten through, said LDR. The CEC members had not raised a UNSC resolution with him, always a staple of conversations with the NLD, during their last few meetings together.

Comment: Time Slipping Away

[1](#)6. (C) LDR stressed that the release of ASSK was key, as only she could organize and motivate the party to take action. However, the regime knows this as well, and thus will be unlikely to release her so long as it continues its "progress" along the Road Map and continues to reap international support -- or at least avoid public criticism as it did at the recent ARF meetings in Jakarta. Meanwhile, the party is being hollowed out. We've noted with some alarm many NLD youth, who seem the most eager and motivated of the NLD's entire structure, heading for the Thai border (ref A). This mini-exodus is likely out of a sense of frustration with the regime's oppression and obstinacy but also, perhaps, with their own party's inability to take action or even communicate a clear policy. End comment.
Martinez